

# A YANKEE MANDARIN

## Who Opened Two Manchurian Ports to the Trade of the Outside World

BY LEWIS STANTON PALEN

IF it had been K'ang Hsi or Ch'ien Lung or the Empress Dowager herself whom I had set out to the capital of the Manchus to see, I could not have been more impressed with the serious importance of the interview before me. "The I. G."—Sir Robert Hart, inspector-general of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs—held such power to make or break the men in his Service, such a reputation for using this power! In a far from placid state of mind, therefore, I turned my rickshaw-man under the gateway to his compound in the Legation Quarter in Peking and gave my card to the *tingchai* to present to this enigmatical despot, who had through forty years built up and dominated the great machine that had given to China fiscal stability and a name for credit abroad.

I was summoned to enter. By so much the die was cast. What would his reception be like—friendly or discouraging? I recalled the eagerness with which I had come out to China in 1900, five years before, on an appointment that had cast a glow of expectation over all my senior year at Cornell. And I recalled also the mental and moral shock administered when the Commissioner of Customs at Shanghai received me and my two companions with: "I have no orders for you boys. Why did you ever come out at this time? The Service is overcrowded, and no one is being promoted just now." I had spent a year and a half in the Service as an unimportant junior, much of it at Nanking in a school for acquiring Chinese. It would not be an easy task to explain to Sir Robert Hart how I had then resigned, had found other work too trying for a pair of weak eyes and was now falling back on the Service for a means of livelihood.

I was left in his outer office to wait until he had finished some work. When he did finally appear, he asked very quietly what I had come for and then subsided into a seemingly unbreakable silence as he listened to my story. His gray eyes never left me for a second, yet he apparently would not speak. I had stated my case and sat awaiting his answer. With none too firm a control of my nerves and thoughts under such unusual treatment, I recalled my one achievement in the Service—a rush job delegated to me by superiors who could find no time for it—made a snap decision and found myself saying, "And, Sir Robert, I should think that my writing of the Decennial Report for Shanghai, which is really a Commissioner's task, would justify your considering my application favorably."

The impassive solemnity of the face softened a bit as he smiled and spoke for the first time since his original question. "You mean you *typewrote* it?" I was stunned for the moment. Was this man of so much power jesting with a youngster who was down? He could not have asked the question seriously; he must have realized that no one would claim anything for typing ability—especially when he knew all too well that he had

not permitted the use of a typewriter for official work in the Service before 1900.

Whatever the real facts, reason was not at the helm at that moment; blind sentiment had taken control. Youth is not famed for lack of temerity. My sense of fairness was so outraged by his jest that I took it for granted I should never be readmitted to his Service and decided, therefore, to meet him as man to man with his own methods. Inconsiderate of his years and position as such a procedure was, I borrowed his own words and manner and answered: "Yes, I typewrote it; but, before I *typewrote* it, I *composed* it!" Then I sat back, abashed by my act, and waited for him to break the silence, since I was adopting his tactics all round. More deeply versed in human nature than I, he waited the longer and forced me to end the interview and go. Rising, I asked when I might come to receive his answer—if I might do so on Monday morning, because I wished to make my affairs definite as soon as possible.

"Oh, no," he said in the same expressionless voice, "you need not bother to come. I shall send a note to you at the hotel."

Thinking that all chance of ever again being a member of the Service had slipped from me, I decided to ask even more than I had, in view of the fact that nothing much mattered now. So I added, before taking my leave, that I desired a northern port for that first summer season, in order to have a chance to gain physically, and that in the autumn I should be ready to go wherever he might choose to send me. Then I turned and left the man whose power to make or break my immediate life prospects was absolute and who had led me into a foolish, ill-considered act by his merciless thrust of humor.

Sir Robert was a quite different type of administrator from any of those whom I had met during my brief business life at home. Among them were men who had great power and had themselves built vast, ramifying systems that included as many subordinates as this dictator controlled, but I had never come into contact with any one in American business life who had the reputation among his staff for such whimsicality in the use of his power. It so happened that the mail of the following morning brought me a letter from an American Consul who had promised me a post in his Consulate, offering to combine with this another billet, which would give me a living salary until something better should be available for me. This made the day more agreeable; I took a long walk around the impressive walls of Peking, within sight of the yellow roofs that sheltered the Empress Dowager, and felt that the other dictator, within his gray-walled compound, could be left to toy with his Service as he chose. I should probably be off down the coast the following morning to take up my new work at the Consulate.

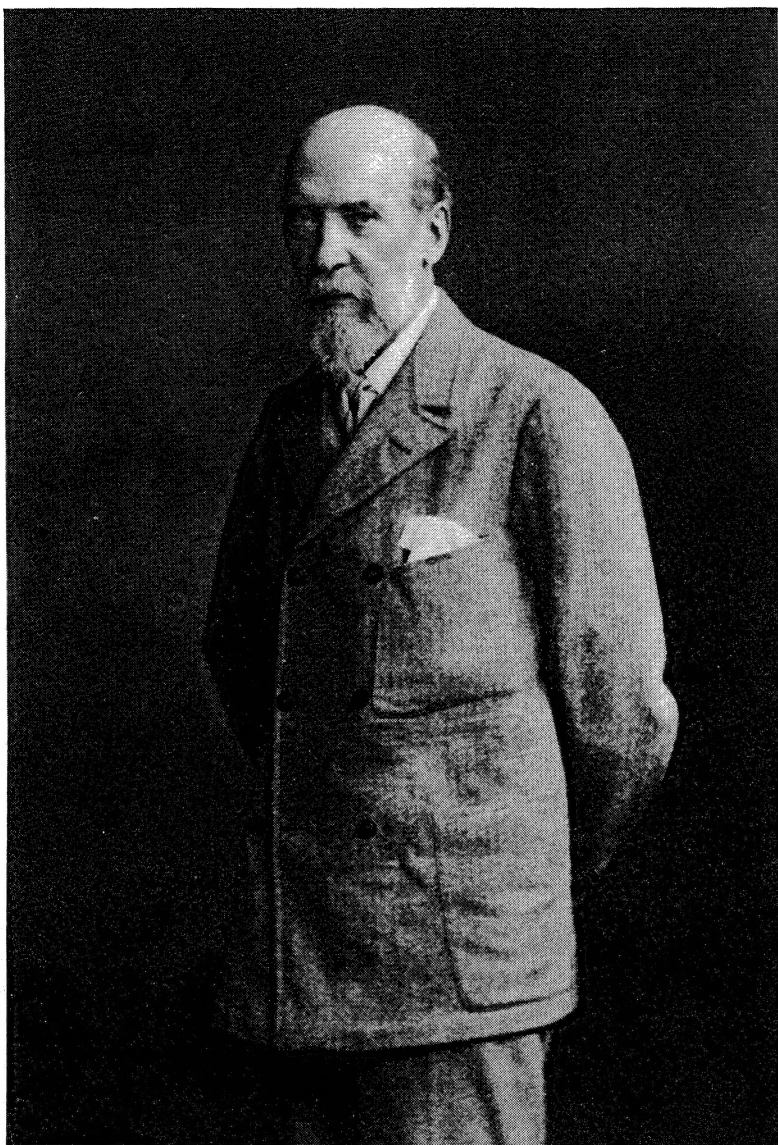
A laconic note from the I. G. was delivered to me that next morning at seven-thirty, while I was dressing.

A S I A

After the address it ran simply: "Please come to the office at three this afternoon. I wish to have a few moments' further talk with you." That made of the day a riddle which I was powerless to guess. The answer came when the quiet little Irishman appeared again from his inner office and spoke quite as unconcernedly as he had the day before. "I have decided I can reemploy you and shall send you to Tientsin. If your eyes are equal to the task, I should like to have you do a piece of work there similar to the one you did in Shanghai, since the Decennial for the port has not yet been written. In view of the . . ." And with this he placed me back in the list of juniors two grades higher than I had been on resigning and promised me another step up if I should do a satisfactory report for Tientsin.

Once more I was a servant of the Dragon Throne and of this now metamorphosed, kindly-voiced little man with the searching gray eyes. Instead of allowing me to go, when I thought all the business of our interview had been transacted, he kept me for quite half an hour, chatting over my recent teaching experience at St. John's College (now University), in Shanghai, and taking a keen interest in my experiments with Latin classes. He was especially fond of Horace and very evidently at home in his works. In due course he sent me away with a cordial wish that my health might prove equal to my task and that I might do well in the Service—just as if he were an entire outsider and had nothing to do with my career. Thus I left him, and later Peking, warmly pleased over having received his favor but marveling at the thinness of the thread upon which the Fates who spin beneath those blue-gray tiles chose to hang our Service careers.

There followed almost two years of labor in Tientsin, into which, since this story is of experiences elsewhere, I shall not enter—not even to describe the magnificent annual receptions which the Viceroy, who was none other than Yuan Shih-kai, gave to the members of the foreign colony. Those were days full of flavor for a junior in the



*This is the "I. G."—the late Sir Robert Hart, for forty odd years inspector-general of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs. Much loved and feared by subordinates was this enigmatical despot*

Service. Then, with no warning, from that section of heaven which was labeled "Peking" there fell manna of undreamed sweetness into my very lap. A letter with the little red monogram "R. H." on the envelope had come through the several curious and knowing clerks and tingchais of the port to be laid upon my desk with ceremony befitting the presentation of a crown—or an order of banishment, since it could easily be either. And, what was more, the handwriting was so difficult that I might not be able to make out which of the two it was. Fortunately, however, the text was clear and gave me to understand that somehow I had been appointed Acting Commissioner, to go out to the Yalu and open to trade the ports of Antung and Tatung-kow, and that the I. G. congratulated me on my good fortune in securing this promotion, this interesting post—all just as

if he had had nothing whatever to do with it. The official despatches would follow in the morning, and from them I could learn the details. With a head full of wonder over what these would contain and what it all really meant, I went off to sleep that night, unconscious of the fact that I had also been made a real, Emperor-certified mandarin.

What is a mandarin? H. A. Giles, in his *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*, makes the trader answer the query of the little boy with: "A mandarin is one who rides out in a sedan-chair or on a horse; who, when at home, sits in a lofty hall; whose summons is answered by a hundred voices; who is looked at only with sidelong eyes, and in whose presence all people stand aslant—that is to be a mandarin."

At the very outset I must confess to having missed some of the perquisites of the Chinese official as here expressed, though I *did* ride out in a sedan-chair or on a horse and sat often and long in a lofty hall. At my grandest, I could muster only eight voices in my domestic and some thirty or forty in my official staff to answer my summons, and I never noticed any one making sidelong

glances at me or standing "aslant" in my presence, whatever that may mean. Perhaps it were fairer to add Mr. Giles' other definition: "Any Chinese official, civil or military, who wears a button. From the Portuguese *mandar*, to command."

Without in any way questioning the fact that there must be many immeasurably deeper thrills in life for those who handle larger affairs or who undergo great and tragic crises of emotion, I find it difficult to imagine anything more stirring in the life of a youngster in the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs than the receiving of a bundle of despatches carrying orders to go into a little-known part of the empire and open two new marts to the trade of the outside world. Their contents bulked even bigger as I read. They carried word that men were being drawn from numerous distant offices to join me at Mukden and travel down to Antung with me or to report

Englishman, a newly appointed Japanese and a second Japanese of not too long experience, I trembled most over the thought of the Chinese correspondence, which I should be forced to carry on single-handed with my Chinese associate, the Superintendent of Customs, to say nothing of the translations of the periodic and annual reports. However, I had signed on for any leading rôle that might be issued me, and there was no hope of ever having another chance if I asked now to be put back in the rank of the "supers."

For those who have not happened to paddle a Korean dugout along the lower reaches of the Yalu River, it is but fair to point out, by way of orientation, that Antung is a bustling Chinese lumber-mart about twenty miles from the mouth of this river, which forms the boundary between Manchuria and Korea. The port came formally into the life of the outer world under the terms



*A Peking cart at its best, declares Lewis Stanton Palen, appears to the initiated as naught else but a cleverly baited trap, which closes with misery around the unfortunate individual who ventures within. Mr. Palen's insistence upon sitting outside the hood, under which he made his servant take the bumping, often lost face for him among the local gentry*

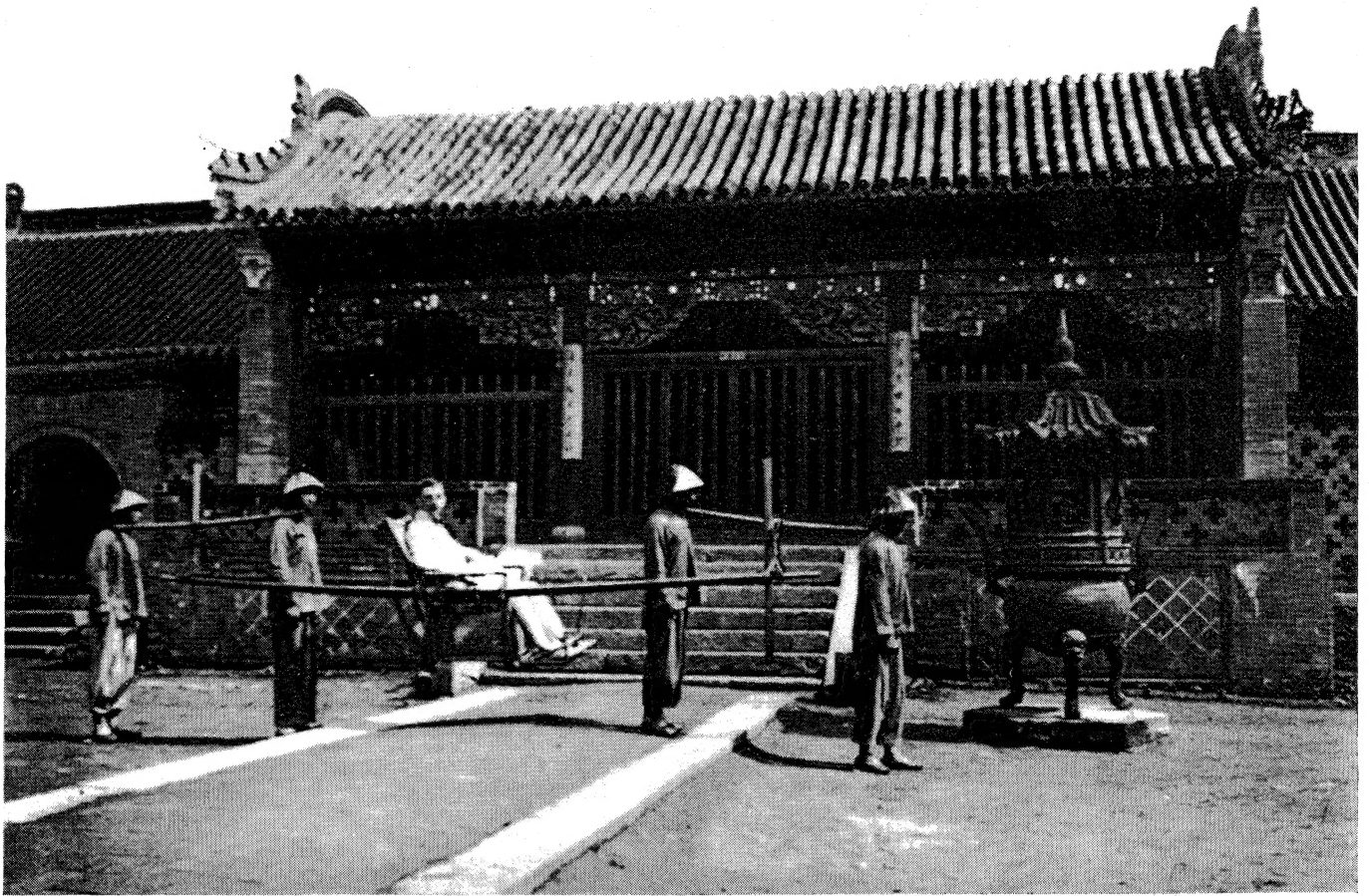
there after my arrival. There were three junior assistants besides Chinese clerks and *shupans*, or copyists, for the office, and a Tidesurveyor with his examiners and watchers to fill the posts in the outdoor staff. Later there would be an Acting Deputy Commissioner to take charge of the subsidiary port at Tatungkow.

Directions enough accompanied the staffing arrangements to make my head swim. There were all the forms for the daily routine of the general office, for the use of the secretary and Chinese writer, for the accounts and returns and for all the outdoor work. Then, too, a set of regulations for the trade of the frontier would have to be drawn up and promulgated, after the local conditions had been studied and the regulations of the older river and frontier ports had been adapted to our local needs. Since the assistants counted only a very inexperienced

of the treaty of 1903, between China and the United States, wherein it was agreed that Antung should be opened by China as a "place of international residence and trade." Its real advent into world history, however, was brought about by the initial land engagement between the Russians and the Japanese on May 1, 1904, when the soldiers of the Mikado forced the river crossing between Old Wiju and Chiuliencheng and started that drive into Manchuria which ended with the capitulation of the armies of the Czar. The battle-field lay eight or nine miles above the town itself, at a point where the Yalu, joined by a tributary from the west called the Sha-ho, divides into several streams that spread out over the widened valley.

Following this success, the Japanese established headquarters for Kuroki's army in Antung and made it





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the base for further operations. As the advance from the base lengthened, they built that tortuous thread of a narrow-gage railway up over the ranges and down again into the plains near Mukden which, in later years, was to become a link in the Fusan-Mukden standard-gage line. They took over practical charge of the port and all its activities during the remainder of the war and then, when peace had been signed, continued a development of their settlement there and a share in the administration of the port that amounted to domination. During these war and post-war years they paid no import or export duties to the Chinese government, though they were supposed to have kept a record of the trade movements in 1906—the year before my arrival—with a view to determining by subsequent negotiation what duties should be paid.

And this, we found, was the task that had been set us—to go and establish control over the growing commerce of the port and to reassume, for the Chinese government, authority over its shipping and trade. That made of the adventure something more than an excursion into the geographically unknown. Boundless is the temerity of youth! One day, shortly before I left Tientsin, I happened to meet on the street one of the highest ranking men in the Service, who had a large voice in affairs at Peking. He warned me that I was tackling something of a problem and must remember I had a strong, virile government to face and a very weak one behind me for backing. I could not believe for

a moment that he would advocate a policy of supineness in the admittedly difficult situations which were expected to develop; so, in my mind, I merely reversed his rule for guidance and assured myself that any government trying to secure undue and illegal advantages would suffer the weakness incident to being in the wrong and that I had behind me not only China but all the Treaty Powers interested in the Manchurian trade.

With this bit of youthful reasoning I took leave of Tientsin and headed northward. When I arrived at Mukden, on one of the last days of February, 1907, the thermometer ranged somewhere between ten and twenty degrees below zero. Furs and sheepskins and the biting, dust-driving winds from the unbroken plains of Mongolia seemed to be the chief elements of importance in this old seat of the Manchus. I was to remain a few days to go over with the Senior Commissioner of Customs for Manchuria—who had been despatched the previous year more or less as a diplomatic representative to cooperate with the Viceroy—matters connected with the new frontier. Also, I was to pay my respects to the Viceroy himself and receive any particular instructions he might care to give, as well as to await the first members of my new staff.

There was, as it happened, a real man in the Viceroy's post, one under whom it would be a satisfaction to work. This was the well-known Chinese scholar and statesman, Chao Erh-hsun, a *hanlin* whose name was familiar throughout the empire. (Continued on page 1021)



My very first impression of the Tartar General—for so the incumbent of this Viceregal post was then styled—conveyed the idea of a kindly person who would pass as a most courteous gentleman in any land, one who was of large enough mold not to be fearful or hesitant about showing favor to those far below him in the official scale. The Commissioner and I had been summoned into his presence the moment our large, red-paper calling-cards were carried in by the servant at the gate, nor did he raise his cup of tea to his lips, in the recognized signal of the senior official for his callers of lesser rank to go, until long after we expected it. It seemed that he had much to tell us and much to ask about the conditions on the southeastern boundary of his domain.

When he did finally send us away with his courteous "*Yi lu ping an*"—"May your journey be undisturbed and pleasant," we little thought that in the short space of an hour his tingchai would be riding into the Commissioner's compound with the announcement that the Viceroy had come to return my call. Away from his official surroundings, he unbent even further. He made me feel that there was something in the philosophy and code of old-school Chinese leaders which merited unstinted admiration and respect.

It was in my relations with the Viceroy that I was first able to appear officially as a Chinese mandarin. I had received with my despatches from Peking the information that my name was on the list of the Emperor's New Year's honors and that I had been decorated as a Civil Mandarin of the Fourth Grade. This bit of news had run the cup over. What outward difference did it make? None at all! But, whenever I should have to send a despatch to the Tartar General, I could sign it with the modest rank. This, then, was the I. G.'s contribution toward my equipment for meeting the problems on the Korean frontier—a contribution which he probably felt would help smooth the way for me in my relations with my Chinese associates. And did the foreigners in the Chinese government service sport mandarin hats, so that they could wear their buttons for the edification of the world that passed? No, our somber costume remained ever the same, except on certain official occasions, when a diminutive replica of the particular button that indicated one's rank was worn in the lapel of the coat, if one so chose.

The day of departure from Mukden came all too soon; for I was enjoying immensely this introduction into the entirely different Chinese life of the North. Of my staff there had already arrived a big, genial Scotchman, who had been appointed Acting Tidesurveyor and Harbor Master, and who had some seventeen years of service behind him to give stability to our joint efforts; also a younger officer, whose perfect command of both Japanese and English was to prove a most important element in our port administration. He preceded us by a day down over the military railway, which had now been turned into a commercial line from the capital to the southeastern frontier.

The distance was one hundred and eighty-six miles. Yet even for this short run it was necessary for us to be at the station at an uncongenial hour before daylight in order to make the half-way point by six that evening or thereabouts. There was leaving at the same time the new appointee to the post of Intendant of the Eastern Marches, or *Taotai*, at Antung, who also held the concomitant titles of Customs Superintendent and Opener of the Marts of Antung and Tatungkow to

Foreign Trade. In these capacities he was destined to be my close working associate, so that I was very curious to know what manner of man he was. His first appearance did not inspire me; he was fat and heavy and had a marked cast in one eye, as well as a heavy mustache that drooped unpleasantly around the corners of what I took to be a most sensual mouth. His teeth were also very unprepossessing. He seemed only to grunt out answers to the servants who helped him out of his Peking cart at the railway station in the stinging cold of that early March morning. When he approached and spoke to me, however, all these impressions were wiped out by the unquestionable good humor that he emanated. His smile was jovial and gracious and his voice most pleasing.

Besides the big *Taotai*, the Tidesurveyor and myself there were also an equally large Chinese assistant to the *Taotai* and a Japanese dressed in Chinese clothes, who was in some way attached to him. For the five of us superior mortals the *Taotai* had arranged with the railway for a private car, about which we had been informed the evening before with no little impressiveness. When we drew up alongside it, we found the fore-and-aft measurement, counting all the overhang, to be about eight feet and the beam about half that figure. It had small windows of single panes of glass and a floor with immense cracks between the boards, which, needless to say, were not tongued-and-grooved. There were a narrow side door at each end, opening inward, and two narrow board benches running along the remaining space of the side wall.

When the Intendant of the Eastern Marches stuck his head through the doorway and looked over the accommodations, he drew back with the remark that they were not too luxurious and told his servant to bring a skin rug, which he had in the cart. This he ordered spread on the floor at the back end of the private carriage his forethought had provided and sat himself down with his back against the off-side door, laughing as he did so and remarking that he did not know whether he would ever be able to get up. And he it recorded that he never did rise that whole day, until we reached the little station of Tsaohokow, not at the scheduled hour of six but well on toward midnight. With it all he remained patient and jovial, save for the hours when he chose to sleep. We, of less rank and fortune and immeasurably less patience, even in our great fur-lined coats had to use every known device to keep warm and to resist the penetrating hardness of the narrow seats. We sent out a raiding party at one of the stations for the round kerosene-oil stove our servants were carrying and put it down in the narrow aisle between our knees. Even with this and all other possible palliatives the day was interminably long. Yet we were riding *de luxe* all this time, while the poor common herd—among them our servants and the *Taotai*'s guard—had to content themselves with places on the baggage or freight in the open cars. Under these circumstances the Chinese inn at Tsaohokow, with its warmed *kangs*, appealed to us with all the luxury of a palace.

With the same early start the following morning, we continued winding up over passes where we could look out over the track below in four or five folds and range upon range of mountains above. In the afternoon we came to the prefectural town of Fengwangcheng, "City of the Phoenix," which was on my list of possible subsidiary ports, if I should recommend that it be opened to trade. Naturally I gazed upon it and its ancient wall with mingled feelings of ownership and awe, thinking

at the time that this was my first sight of a port with which I might one day feel a very close kinship.

Just beyond it we passed the little village of Kaolimen (Korean Gate), which could have told us a wealth of story, had we but been attuned to the wave-lengths of the past. For here, at this break in the willow palisade which bounded the Chinese side of the neutral, unoccupied zone once jointly established by the Korean and Chinese governments along the Yalu River, the tribute-bearers of the Koreans had passed into the realm of the Son of Heaven on their way to Peking. During the few weeks of each year while the tribute-cortège was winding slowly to the yellow-tiled palace in the Manchu capital and back, Korean merchants were allowed, by the grace of the Emperor, to trade within his dominions. Consequently many of these emissaries of commerce attached themselves to the tribute-bearers and sold or exchanged their wares in Peking for the more graceful and luxurious articles of Chinese craftsmanship. Inasmuch as ginseng was one of the staples of the Hermit Kingdom, the Korean merchants loaded much of this valuable root on their diminutive horses to serve them as the surest and most compact medium of barter. Many of the queer-hatted men with their long, scanty black beards and baggy white clothes also halted at Fenghwangcheng and other cities on the route of the tribute-cortège to visit regular customers and marts; but every one of them had to be at the barrier to go out with the mission or take the certain penalty of losing his head if he were caught within the palisade after the tribute-bearers had gone.

In those days no Chinese was supposed to venture into this strip of no man's land which had been laid out along the river, except he secure a permit for cutting reeds or some such temporary occupation. Koreans caught on the Chinese side of the river were summarily beheaded. And it was down across this belt of territory, which, until little more than a generation before, had thus been kept clear of settlers, that we now trundled in our toy train, bent on bringing about the next great step in its economic life by throwing it open to contact with the world beyond the four seas.

It was dark when we pulled into our new home; yet there were the District Magistrate, the Police Magistrate, the Native Customs Taotai, a representative of the Japanese Consul and several of the leaders in the Merchants' Guild to welcome the two officials who were to give to the mart a place among the Treaty Ports of the Empire. In the crowd I also spied our little officer who had preceded us and learned that the quarters in the back part of the Customs compound were in readiness for us, though they were a bit snug and evidenced no waste on luxuries.

The moment I had an opportunity to take a turn about, the next morning, I found that the port consisted of a prosperous-looking mercantile section above the creek, on which the Custom-house was located, and a spacious, dike-encircled Japanese settlement just below the creek. In this the streets were wide and well laid out and boasted many official and commercial buildings of some pretensions. A line of hills carried the western horizon of the town high into the sky, though the valley both up and down the river was broad and open. Across the Yalu were the Korean mountains at some ten to twenty miles distance. When the spring broke, covering all these hills with lush shades of green and giving to the river the dark blue of a Honolulu sea, one needed naught but the dashing touches of Turkey red at the mastheads of the river junks

to complete a brilliant and pleasing picture.

But, when we took up our quarters on the banks of the Yalu, the color of its waters was hidden under several feet of ice; for the river did not usually break until the last ten days of March and sometimes not until the first of April. This gave us time, before the season's trade should begin, for the formal opening of the Custom-house and the first round of official calls.

At the very outset we were made to realize how thoroughly Japanese the life of the port had become. A small foot-bridge had been thrown across the creek just beside the Custom-house, with a gate, bounded on all points with barbed wire, located in the middle of the bridge and locked. To secure permission to cross that bridge and thus save our staff a walk of more than a half-mile to the lower examination shed, which we were arranging for the convenience of the Japanese trade, we had to apply to the Japanese railway officials, and even then we used to find the gate locked against us at regular intervals—and nothing but the same tedious negotiations would turn the bolt.

This and many other matters that came up revealed most patently the attitude of the Japanese toward our administration. Our coming synchronized with the period of their most active forward policy in South Manchuria, where they were determined to do everything possible to consolidate the position they had won by their expulsion of the Russians. They not only found the determination to open the place just at this time—though its conversion to a Treaty Port had been provided for as far back as 1903 and never previously carried into effect—most unacceptable, but the despatch of a staff that was not headed by a Japanese a doubly unwelcome feature. They made their feelings known in the distinctly unfriendly attitude of those first months of our tenure. Later, when my eyes gave me so much trouble that I had to have a man at my elbow all day in the office to read and write everything for me, they even went so far as to voice in their papers a note of sympathy for me, adding that of course it would be necessary for me to give over my work at Antung, since such a method of handling office matters led to every one's knowing all that was going on in the Customs, which was on the face of it unthinkable.

Nor did matters stop here. When the examiner who had come with us from Mukden persisted in finding morphia in false-bottom cases and all sorts of other irregularities in the passing of cargo, a notice appeared in the local Japanese paper to the effect that, unless a certain officious examiner in the Customs mended his ways, the "all-seeing eye of Heaven" would look down upon him and remove him from his sphere of malpractice. Able and fearless as this little man usually was in his work under the most difficult circumstances, he came to me one morning in the office, all unnerved and broken by the strain, to beg me for a transfer to another port. Two drunken coolies had been sent to the house of another member of the staff the evening before to attempt to do that man bodily harm, and he himself had been warned that his turn was coming, unless he changed his methods. He had his wife and small child to think of and had run the limit of his individual courage. He knew his enemies could "get him" in a hundred ways if they so chose.

This made a nasty problem; for the place swarmed with men who would do anything for a fee. I had myself received an unofficial warning from a member of the Japanese consular staff that it would not be wise for me to venture out on the street after dark, since the

Consulate could not be responsible for what happened to me. I remember the examiner's face when I said to him: "We've got to stick it out here. If we yield and transfer you under pressure from outside, we'll never run this port. I'll notify the Consul at once of this, as well as of the threat you brought me about my own movements, and tell him that I have requested Peking to hold him personally responsible for anything that may happen to any member of our staff. If he has knowledge of this threat, he has power to stop its execution." The conscientious little officer left me in evident distress over the task I had set him but, I am glad to be able to record, never showed in his later work any tendency to slacken up in his duties. He was soon involved in one of our biggest smuggling cases, which ran into very large figures—a most flagrant example of customs-beating by a powerful exporting firm.

Unfortunately this was not, however, the end of our difficulties. One morning my usually jovial Scotch Tidesurveyor entered the office for his morning report in a far from normal mood. He regretted, he said, to have to inform me that he and B—— had again been treated to an annoying reception on a street in the Japanese settlement—this time with some dirty swill water. He could only notify me of his intention not to take any more of this sort of thing lying down. He had a well-loaded stick, which he always carried, and he wanted me to know, if I heard he was being held at the police station, that he had not acted hastily but had reached the limit of endurance. I remember how his face hardened when I answered him: "You and I have been sent here to run this port in peace. We have evidently been selected by the I. G. because he thought we could do it." They do not want to be troubled at Peking with diplomatic cases. So, if you get into a scrap in the street, it is going to count against both of us, no matter how much justification you feel you have for your actions." He showed by his manner that he was not at all sympathetic to the dictum I was laying down for his guidance. I liked the man immensely and came afterward to count him among my best and most loyal friends. When I saw that he was evidently feeling he had come to serve under a theorizing youngster, I gave him the second barrel, well choked to place the load in a small spot.

"What I am now going to tell you ought to be said outside the office, but there is no convenient place; so we shall have to carry on here. It is this. If you get into a fight with these fellows, you must take care of yourself and hit first; for I have found we can expect nothing from the Consul. If you look for any satisfaction, get it on the spot and don't come to me later for it." His face changed. "Thanks!" was all he said as he turned and went out. I felt sure that I had sacrificed some important principle, but I salved my feeling with the knowledge that compromise has often oiled the bearings of difficulty.

With it all, however, there was another and much pleasanter side of these early days with the Japanese on the soil which they seemed bent on making their own, at least economically if not politically. Following the round of officials calls, dinners were given as a matter of course. One night the Japanese Consul invited me to be his guest of honor to meet the leading officials and business men of the Japanese community.

The gathering was marked for me by a most striking incident. With some twelve or fourteen of us in the group, the Consul herded us into the dining-room, where a table had been spread in foreign style out of deference to my

probable aversion to squatting for an hour or two on the floor—something I would much rather have done, in order to be at home with my hosts in their own customs. After giving me the place on his right, the Consul assigned to a stalwart, upstanding Japanese General, who was in command of the troops of the region, the chair to the right of the Vice-Consul, who was placed at the opposite end of the table. The gray-haired soldier, who had made a fine name for himself during two dramatic wars in this same Manchuria, straightened up with his hands at his sides and sent out some Gatling-gun phrases of short, choppy Japanese which took the Consul and the other guests by surprise. A tenseness of unmistakable character seized the group waiting behind the Consul as the fighting man continued to speak, in spite of the attempts of the host to interrupt him. Something dramatic was on, I knew, although I could not turn to my Deputy Commissioner and ask what it was all about. When the Consul did succeed in breaking through the General's charge, an argument ensued which ended in a graceful surrender by the soldier, who stationed himself behind the chair to which he had been bidden.

Soon my associate found the opportunity to explain: "The General was protesting at being put at the foot of the table. He said that he was glad to come to pay you honor but that he deserved the second place of honor and not one down at the foot. The Consul explained to him that, where there is a joint host, such as the Vice-Consul is tonight, the second place is at his right. So now he is appeased."

That was the beginning of a very interesting friendship between the old General and the young American. That evening, I remember, when we found we could exchange a few ideas through the medium of the very sketchy French which both of us spoke, he told me that he was really not a fit member for polite society, only a rough soldier who, until he was sixteen or seventeen, had lived in the mountains, more like a wild animal than a human being. In those days, he had never, for instance, known what a hat was. I thought it very gracious and most diplomatic that he should make this *amende honorable* for his apparent breach of etiquette.

If there were difficulties during these first months of life on the banks of the Yalu, there were many compensating features that kept the heart young. Not the least of these was the attitude of the Chinese officials and merchants and especially of my associate, the Intendant of the Eastern Marches. We were constantly back and forth between Yamen and Custom-house over some new problem of nurturing our baby of a port into a real child. We were hardly installed before he proposed a trip to Tatungkow at the mouth of the river to inspect the place and to make provision for the branch office there. With messengers sent on ahead to report our coming, the local official had a double line of soldiers at the edge of the town to do us homage as we trundled up in Peking carts behind our mounted guard. Padded and cushioned though it may be, a Peking cart at its best appears to the initiated as naught else but a cleverly baited trap, which closes with misery around the unfortunate individual who ventures within. But I learned afterward that my insistence on sitting in the to me much more comfortable seat on the shafts outside the hood, under which I made my servant take the bumping, lost me much face among the local gentry—and probably gave a corresponding amount to my "boy," who could loll inside in the place of honor.

Even if I had known it at the time, I might

not have felt very regretful, since I have never entered a more unprepossessing, disconsolate-looking place than that small village on the mud-flats along the Great Eastern Creek. That I yielded to the pressure from Peking to open it and establish a Customs there, because of some diplomatic insistence of the Chinese authorities, never brought me anything but regret and the tendency to apologize to all the staff members whom I had to send there. The town had nothing to rescue it from hopeless depression, no place near it to which men could go for recreation and not enough work to warrant a tingchai, let alone an Acting Deputy Commissioner and staff.

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*Next month Lewis Stanton Palen will tell of his residence in an old Chinese temple.*